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Serial No.: 09/971,975

REMARKS

The instant amendment is being submitted to clarify the scope of protection afforded by the claims. Specifically, Applicant has amended claim 1 to more clearly define the scope of protection provided and to more clearly define the structural relationships between various elements of the claimed structure.

Claims 36-48 have not yet been examined. These claims are directed to an aircraft engagement assembly having three principal elements, namely a main frame, a first floor panel and a second floor panel and a third floor panel. The main frame defines a floor. The first floor panel is associated with the main frame and is arranged for pivoted rotation about a generally horizontal axis. Reference is made to axis 36 in Fig. 3A (Exhibit 1) attached hereto. The second floor panel, according to claims 36-46, is secured or otherwise associated with the first floor panel and is arranged for movement along the main frame in a direction perpendicular to the generally horizontal axis. The direction of travel of the second floor is shown by arrow A in the attached Exhibit 1.

Applicants respectfully submit that the art of record, either individually or in combination, neither teach nor suggest the structure made subject to the claims 36-48. Stephenson et al teaches a passenger boarding bridge system wherein retractable floor members 31 are adapted for forward and rearward motion. Stephenson et al does not teach a floor panel which is pivotedly arranged for motion about a generally horizontal axis.

Zhou teaches a floor element 104 which may be extended forwardly toward an aircraft as well as retracted. Although Zhou teaches the use of side panels 103, these panels are pivoted about axes which are oriented "parallel" to the direction of travel of the floor element 104. Claims 36-48 all require that the first floor panel be pivoted about a generally horizontal axis which is oriented "perpendicular" to the direction of travel of the second floor panel. Zhou therefore does not

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teach a perpendicular orientation of the pivot axis and the direction of travel of the second floor panel, instead it teaches a parallel arrangement of the pivot axis and the direction of travel.

Any combination of Stephenson et al with Zhou would likewise not produce a structure having the claimed limitations. Neither of the references teaches the claimed perpendicular orientation of the pivot axis of a first floor panel with the direction of travel of a second floor panel. In the absence of such a teaching, applicants respectfully submit that claims 36-48 define over the cited art.

Claims 39 and 40 include the limitation of a control console associated with the frame of the aircraft engagement assembly. Applicant submits that the presence of such a control console is shown in applicant's drawings, specifically Fig. 1. Such a control console is identified by the arrow B in the attached Exhibit 2. Exhibit 1 is a reproduction of drawing figure 1 of applicant's drawings. Applicants respectfully submit that none of the cited references appear to teach or suggest the placement of a pair of moveable floor panels having the claimed construction in the specified spatial relationship with such a control console, i.e. wherein the first floor panel is positioned intermediate the control console and the second floor panel.

Claim 47 provides for the additional limitation of the main floor of the engagement assembly being pivotedly mounted. Applicant respectfully submits that paragraph [0058] of the specification and the drawings of applicants' application disclose a structure which is known in the art to provide a pivoted motion to the floor elements 25. In view of this disclosure, applicants submit that the instant disclosure provides adequate support for the introduction of such a limitation into claim 47.

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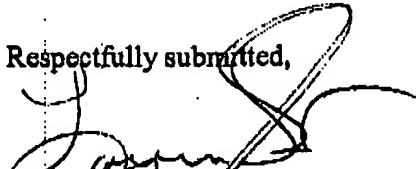
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CONCLUSION:

Reconsideration of the instant application is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,


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